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Contemporary chic in an Edwardian villa

Traditional from the outside, unashamedly modern within, this updated and extended period home is perfect for modern family life

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PRODUCTION BEN KENDRICK

STAIRCASE

Interior designer Helen Stiles drew the plan for the new spiral staircase while a specialist company produced the technical drawings. A bespoke teardrop light adds drama as it cascades through the floors. **Lights, Oka**

HOMES

HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Olga Barnes, an investor and entrepreneur, her husband Gil, a biotechnology investment banker, and their children, Olivia, Myles and Siena

THE PROPERTY

A detached five-bedroom Edwardian house in west London

DINING ROOM

For dinner parties, birthdays and special occasions, the family sit around this oval table. Olga and Helen constructed the light fitting, which arrived in individual pieces from Italy. **Table, Totem by Sovet. Chairs, BoConcept** →

SNUG AREA

This cosy section of the open-plan kitchen at the back of the house features a custom-lit sofa in teal vintage-effect velvet from The Sofa & Chair Company, Imola chair and cowhide rug. BoConcept



'WE HAVE SOCIAL SPACES, AS WELL AS AREAS TO RETREAT TO'



RECEPTION ROOM

This page and opposite, top right A frosted bubble chandelier sets a fun tone in this room, which is home to many items collected on the family's travels, including the small sculptures that Olga bought in Israel because they remind her of her children. Lighting, Dowsing & Reynolds. Stools, Norr11. Shelving unit, Hux

With its handsome double-fronted exterior, wisteria-clad brickwork and bay windows, the home Olga Barnes shares with her family has all the characteristics you'd expect of a traditional Edwardian property. Open the front door, however, and that notion is instantly dispelled. Rather than looking down a tight hallway, you see light flooding in from a wall of steel-framed glass doors at the back of the house, and the green of the garden beyond. 'I love the fact that you see the outside as soon as you enter,' says Olga. 'A wide open space like this is so welcoming.'

Before buying it, Olga and her husband Gil had rented the house for six years. 'It was special,' she remembers, 'at the end of the street, which is green and leafy despite being in the city.' It meant that they had plenty of time to plan a redesign, which entailed digging out below ground to create a basement level, extending the ground and first floor at the rear, and removing walls to open up the rooms.

'We wanted to create social spaces as well as areas to retreat to so we could have some peace and quiet,' Olga explains. Then there was

also an additional important requirement to consider: where to accommodate Olga's 100-strong army of houseplants.

Proposing plans in a conservation area can be a challenge. The couple had three failed applications before turning to architects Zulufish, whose common-sense approach ensured it was approved. 'Setting it back from the boundaries meant there were no issues about infringing neighbours' privacy or blocking their sunlight,' explains Caroline Milns from the firm, which managed to double the size of the property.

Olga and Gil were just as bold in their ambitions for the interior. 'Rather than filling the house with our existing furniture, we started again and sought out pieces that would suit the new space.' To help make the most of the property, Olga worked with interior designer Helen Stiles of Hide & Seek. Helen's flair for creating a 'collected not decorated' look, and ability to tell stories through her schemes, appealed to the couple, who are keen travellers and have amassed art pieces and objects during family trips as far afield as Japan, South Africa and India. Some of these pieces are now displayed on the reception room's shelves, in what Olga describes as, 'a kind of world bazaar from the adventures of our lives'.

As the house was restructured and extended – including the conversion of the loft, which is now used by the children for sleepovers – it meant replacing all the plumbing and electrics. 'You don't often get the opportunity to start from scratch,' notes Olga, and the →

'RATHER THAN FILLING THE HOUSE WITH OUR EXISTING FURNITURE, WE STARTED AGAIN AND SOUGHT OUT PIECES TO SUIT THE NEW SPACE'

KITCHEN

The breakfast bar provides a stylish place to perch, while the philodendron softens the clean lines of the units and industrial lighting. **Chairs,** Philippe Starck for Kartell. **Neolith worktop and units,** Poggenpohl. **Lighting,** Hatteras Bay. **Wall paint in French Grey,** Little Greene. **Sink,** Subline Silgranite by Blanco. **Tap,** Quooker →

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DINING AREA

Olga and Gil found the chairs and tables in Bangkok's Chatuchak market and had them shipped back. Olga spotted the lighting installation in a hotel restaurant. "We had more than 50 colours of these bubbles to choose from."

Lights, Bocci
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BASEMENT

This cosy space is 'very much for the end of the day', and the Tulip table, a replica of the Eero Saarinen design, offers an alternative place to eat in the evenings. Chairs, Philippe Starck for Kartell. Chandelier, Buster & Punch

couple were able to create a smart home with Lutron lighting and air conditioning, with the units cleverly concealed in the joinery.

Appropriately, as the room is central to family life, work began with the kitchen extension. 'Gil is the cook, though Olivia is also really good,' says Olga. 'We eat a lot of Asian inspired dishes... the rice cooker is running nonstop.' Handleless Poggenpohl units give a streamlined look, while a counter with stools beneath is perfect for pizza dough rolling, drinks and breakfast on the go – and there's plenty of space to allow for two people to prepare food together. 'We put the cooker against a wall with reflective tinted mirror-glass behind it, which means Gil can see what's going on while he's cooking.'

Helen's brief also included creating a cinema room in the dug-out basement. It has a bar that features mirror-backed, bottle-lined shelving and a seating area, a large screen and modular sofa, and a table 'that doubles as a place where anyone can head with their homework and spread out all their papers'.

As well as adding more space to the property, optimising natural light was a priority in the refurbishment, and with this in mind, large black-framed steel and glass doors by Fabeo were fitted throughout the back of the house. Another major job was moving the staircase from the middle to the right of the property and creating an open spiralling design in steel, which has a glass-drop chandelier spanning three floors.

But the project wasn't without its disasters. A faulty toilet flusher gave rise to a flood and a huge amount of damage. Floors and the heating systems beneath it had to be taken out and replaced, plaster walls rebuilt, and tiled bathrooms taken apart and retiled.

Nevertheless, Olga and Gil have achieved a stunning contemporary home within a period property. It's the perfect multi-tasking modern design they set out to create, offering opportunities to be social, but also to have peace. As Olga concludes: 'Everyone can find what they need: space to themselves or a place to spend time together.'

For information about Zulufish, visit zulufish.co.uk. Visit hideandseek.london for interior design by Helen Stiles



BAR AREA

The darker walls give the basement a club-like feel, complemented by custom-made shelving with wood, brass and aged-bronze mirrors. Wall paint in Lead, Little Greene. Shelving and cabinetry: both Hux. Sofa, Nor11



LOFT BATHROOM

Above left Tiles, Renna in Verde. Light, Greg. Bath, Coniston. Brushed brass bath-shower mixer and limestone floor tiles, Geologica at CP Hart

DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM

Right Sink, mirror and fittings; Tiles, Vertical Brick; all CP Hart

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MAIN BEDROOM

This page and opposite, top right The wardrobe is part of one large unit that conceals a TV and door to Olga's wardrobe room. Grasscloth wallpaper, Andrew Martin. Custom-made bedhead, The Sofa & Chair Company. Bedside table, The Conran Shop. Pendant pebble light, Oka. Reading lamp, Astro Lighting →

'EVERYONE CAN FIND WHAT THEY NEED: SPACE TO THEMSELVES OR A PLACE TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER'





'THE HOUSE IS ON A STREET THAT'S GREEN AND LEAFY DESPITE BEING IN THE CITY'

LOFT

Above This converted space includes an area for the kids' sleepovers as well as an alcove for piano practice, and a small balcony terrace. On the landing area, seen through the glazing, is a tapestry by Olga's mother Natasha Pantelyat (Instagram: @knots_by_nat), who works to commission. **Planter and stand, Nkuku. Basket, The Colombia Collective. Light, Creative Cables**

GARDEN

Left Standard cherries grow through the pergola, creating shade for an alfresco dining area. In the background is the new ground-floor extension, which houses the family eating area and kitchen. **Lights, Industville**